

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

In re Application of:

Yoshiki Sasaki *et al.*

Serial No.:

Filed: Herewith

For: MANUFACTURING METHOD AND
MANUFACTURING APPARATUS
FOR GAS DISCHARGE PANEL

Examiner:

Group Art Unit:

July 9, 2003

Irvine, California 92614

PETITION TO MAKE SPECIAL

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

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Dear Sir:

In accordance with MPEP Section 708.02(viii), applicant hereby requests that the above-identified application be made special and a fee required in accordance with 37 C.F.R. Section 1.17(i) is submitted herewith.

It is believed that the Preliminary Amendment presents all claims directed to a single invention. If, however, it is determined that the claims are not directed to a single invention, applicant hereby agrees to elect without traverse as a prerequisite to the granting of special status.

An international search has been made in the Japanese Patent Office in International Application PCT/JP00/07918 which is the foreign priority application of the present application. The International Search Report identified Japanese patent Documents JP2000-156160,

JP2000-294133, JP11-233002, JP10-40818 and JP61-71533. Copies of these documents with summary English translations are provided herewith.

Subsequently, a further search was conducted in the United States Patent Office on March 12, 2003. This search indicated that the subject matter of the *Snijkers* (U.S. Patent No. 6,476,554) was relevant for disclosing a manufacturing method of a gas discharge panel having a first substrate in which a protective layer was formed and a second substrate on which phosphorous layers were formed.

The Office Action indicated that the subject matter of Claims 2-5, 7-12, and 15-18 was allowable if rewritten in independent form.

These claims were found to distinguish over the prior art and any method of manufacturing of a gas discharge panel wherein a first substrate was placed under a reduced pressure and heated in a first reduced pressure chamber, and/or the second substrate was placed under a reduced pressure and heated in a second reduced pressure chamber prior to an alignment step in which the first and second substrates were aligned under a reduced pressure in a third reduced pressure chamber.

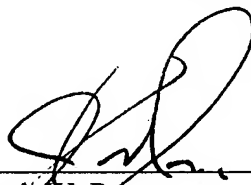
Additionally, Claims 7-10, 16 and 18 were further found allowable since the prior art did not teach placing a first substrate and/or a second substrate in dry gas and heating the substrates prior to an alignment step in which the first and second substrates were aligned in a dry gas in a third dry gas chamber. Claims 11-17 further distinguish over the prior art and the method of manufacturing a gas discharge panel wherein the first substrate is placed under the reduced pressure and heated, and a second substrate is placed in a dry gas before the alignment step is conducted. Finally, Claims 13-14 were found to distinguish over the prior art by teaching the manufacturing apparatus for a gas discharge panel having a first substrate carrying mechanism, a

second substrate carrying mechanism, and an alignment mechanism, wherein each mechanism is provided in different diametrically sealed chambers, which each includes at least one of the gas applying mechanism and a gas exhausting mechanism.

The presently pending claims incorporate these allowable features, and accordingly, are believed to be allowable over the results of these searching efforts. In view of the conducting of an international search and the U.S. Patent Office search, and the finding that the currently pending claims contain allowable subject matter over the results of these searches, it is believed the required conditions to have this case made special have been met. If there are any questions or additional requirements, the undersigned attorney would appreciate a telephone conference.

Very truly yours,

SNELL & WILMER L.L.P.



Joseph W. Price
Registration No. 25,124
1920 Main Street, Suite 1200
Irvine, California 92614-7230
Telephone: (949) 253-4920